

April, 28-30, 2017

Titicut Follies: The Ballet

Company: James Sewell Ballet

Venue: NYU Skirball

Location: New York, NY

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Titicut Follies: The Ballet, a world premiere ballet choreographed by James Sewell and inspired by Frederick Wiseman's startling 1967 documentary, will run for three performances, April 28 – 30, 2017 at NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. Titicut Follies: The Ballet will be performed by the James Sewell Ballet, with an original score by Lenny Pickett.

Wiseman's landmark documentary, shot in a Massachusetts prison for the criminally insane, provides a close and candid look at the lives of psychotic people, many of whom committed serious crimes. As with the film, the ballet is organized around an inmate and staff variety show called "Titicut Follies." The ballet is not a literal presentation of scenes from the film but rather an expression of the ideas and feeling of the film, transformed into the language of ballet.

Titicut Follies, Frederick Wiseman's first documentary, created a sensation when it opened and established the unobtrusive storytelling style that has strongly identified the director's work to this day. The film, celebrating its 50-year anniversary, will open "Early Wiseman," a 16-film series covering the first 18 years of the filmmaker's career (and Part I of a planned complete Wiseman retrospective), at Film Forum in New York City, April 14 – 27. Wiseman and James Sewell will make appearances at the theater during the series. Details and schedule can be found at <http://www.filmforum.org>.

The ballet, a collaboration between Wiseman, Sewell and Pickett, was initiated at NYU's Center for Ballet and the Arts (CBA) when Frederick Wiseman was a Resident Fellow there in the fall of 2014. The Center seeks to encourage new work that expands the field of ballet. There will be post-show discussions for NYU students and the public, featuring Frederick Wiseman, James Sewell, Lenny Pickett and NYU faculty, focusing on the transformation of a documentary movie to a ballet.

The Artists

Lenny Pickett (composer) grew up playing saxophone and clarinet in bars and on the street. He toured through the 70's with the legendary rhythm and blues band Tower of Power. Later, he played and wrote musical arrangements for David Bowie, The Talking Heads, Laurie Anderson and many others. He has collaborated with choreographers Steven Petronio, Charles Moulton, Bebe Miller and Yoshiko Chuma, and with poet Alan Ginsberg among others. His music has been played by the Kronos Quartet, the New Century Saxophone Quartet, the New York Composers Orchestra, and others. He has been the bandleader for NBC's "Saturday Night Live" since 1995, where he's played since 1985. He also teaches in the Jazz Studies program at New York University. <http://www.lennypickettmusic.com>.

James Sewell (choreographer and collaborator) is cited as one of the most original minds in contemporary ballet. Following his studies at the School of American Ballet and work with the NYC Ballet, Sewell toured internationally as a soloist with Elliot Feld before launching his own choreographic endeavors. He has since created nearly one hundred original works and his company recently celebrated its 22nd anniversary.

James Sewell Ballet was founded in New York City by James Sewell and Sally Rouse and brought to Minnesota in 1993. Over two decades later, critically acclaimed JSB performances move and delight audiences across the country. The embodiment of the original vision is a professional company of ten dancers performing innovative work that explores the technical boundaries of ballet. <http://www.jsballet.org>.

Frederick Wiseman (collaborator) has made one film almost every year since 1967, each dealing with an aspect of contemporary life that is reflected in our cultural, social and governmental institutions. Wiseman is also an ardent fan and frequent attendee of dance in NYC and Paris. He has four films about dance – BALLET (1994), LA DANSE – THE PARIS OPERA BALLET (2009), CRAZY HORSE (2011) and BOXING GYM (2010) which Wiseman also considers a dance film. In November, Wiseman received an Honorary Academy Award, "to honor extraordinary distinction in lifetime achievement, exceptional contributions to the state of motion picture arts and sciences, or for outstanding service to the Academy." Zipporah Films is Mr. Wiseman's production and distribution company: <http://www.zipporah.com>.

NYU Center for Ballet and the Arts (CBA)

CBA was founded in 2014 to bring to the art of ballet new ideas and the full resources of a major research university, and to bring ballet into the university as a serious subject of study and research, defining it as a field in the history of culture. The Center serves as a gathering place for choreographers, dancers, scholars and artists from around the world, who study, create and perform ballet and its related arts. Titicut Follies: The Ballet is the first new ballet to reach fruition out of its Resident Fellowship program, and an important milestone in the Center's efforts to encourage new ballets to expand the field.

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts

NYU Skirball Center is the premier venue for the presentation of cultural and performing arts events for New York University and lower Manhattan. NYU Skirball's mission is to showcase and support diverse and eclectic talent from around the world, while cultivating audiences for live performance through deeper engagement opportunities. For more information visit: www.nyuskirball.org.

TICKETS

Titicut Follies: The Ballet will run for three performances: April 28 and 29 at 8 pm, and April 30 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$25- \$55 and may be purchased online at www.nyuskirball.org or in person at the NYU Skirball Center Box Office: Tuesday-Saturday, 12:00-6:00 P.M. NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts is located at 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square, New York, New York 10012.

James Sewell Ballet
566 LaGuardia Place
New York, NY, 10012
<http://www.nyuskirball.org>

Schedule
April 28, 2017: 8:00pm
April 29, 2017: 8:00pm
April 30, 2017: 3:00pm

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